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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9736  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KINSHASA 000573

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/18/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREF](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#) [RW](#)  
SUBJECT: FORMER NORTH KIVU GOVERNOR SERUFULI ON DECOUPAGE,  
NORTH KIVU DYNAMICS

REF: A) KINSHASA 33 B) KINSHASA 378 C) KINSHASA 390  
D) KINSHASA 521

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Samuel V. Brock for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. Former North Kivu Governor Eugene Serufuli has reiterated complaints about the power of ethnic Nande in North Kivu Province and his support to split the province into Nande and "Rwandophone" dominated zones ("decoupage"). He described his relationship with detained Tutsi rebel leader Laurent Nkunda, and support for efforts to promote Rwandophones in North Kivu, but pointedly refused to comment, positively or negatively, on other prospective Rwandophone leaders except to say that the CNDP is "falling apart." Governing North Kivu today would be more complicated than when he first took power in 2000, because the military and administration supporting the governor is weaker. On the other hand, he acknowledged that potential enemies and rivals are weaker as well. Serufuli appears to be positioning himself to be governor again, but he said he had received no signals from Kabila or Kagame. He thought, however, that "decoupage" would occur before any move to change the governor because dividing the province would require an act of the National Assembly, which could easily be managed by the presidency. He expressed appreciation for the USG role to promote peace in the Great Lakes region and detente between Kinshasa and Kigali but was concerned that the U.S. might abandon its engagement. End summary.

2. (C) Meeting with TDY poloff recently, former North Kivu Governor Serufuli expounded at some length on his political program for North Kivu in line with reftels and a December 2, 2008 memo passed widely around the diplomatic corps and foreign observers which advocated the division of North Kivu. When asked if he wrote that document, Serufuli said he did not but that he was in complete accord with its contents and had passed it around to others.

The Trouble with the Nande  
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3. (C) Serufuli argued that the ethnic Nande who are numerically dominant in northern North Kivu (the Grand Nord) and the "Rwandophones" (Hutu and Tutsi) who are the most numerous group in southern North Kivu (the "Petit Nord" or, in Serufuli's lexicon, the "Grand Sud") are fated to compete for control of the province; as long as North Kivu remains a single province, there will be "unending war." He complained that in 1963-64, then-Governor Denis Paluku, a Nande, sought to stir up Nande and other ethnic groups against Banyarwanda Hutus and Tutsis. The same thing happened at the time of the Sovereign National Conference in 1993, when then Governor Jean-Pierre Kalumbo Mbogo, another Nande, stirred up Hundes and other native groups in Masisi and Walikale against Hutus

and Tutsis. In his view, current Governor Julien Paluku has "the same spirit."

14. (C) When TDY poloff countered that, to outsiders, it appeared that Paluku had done a reasonably good job of bringing ethnic balance to his provincial government, Serufuli responded that there were still more Nande in the cabinet than any other group. He then changed his tack somewhat, arguing that the main problem is that, while the Nande are allowed to live in the Petit Nord and do business there, they systematically exclude Rwandophones and others from doing business in the Grand Nord. The Nande are "intolerant...Nande simply do not accept non-Nande."

Decoupage: Cure-all for North Kivu  
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15. (C) The clear way to overcome this problem would be to divide the province. Serufuli argued that this would be a win-win situation for everyone. The Nande and the Rwandophones would each have their own province to control and would stay out of each others, way. The smaller groups -- the Wambuba, Wapere, Watalinga, and Wakobo in the Grand Nord and the Hunde, Tembo, and Nglima in the south -- would also win. When the Nande and the Rwandophones clash, the smaller groups often get caught in the crossfire. Decoupage would allow them to work out a more peaceful and prosperous relationship with the larger groups in their provinces and pursue common interests.

16. (C) When asked where North Kivu would be divided in the

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event of decoupage, Serufuli pointed to TDY poloff,s map, indicating that the line between the two provinces would be at Kanyabayonga, with Lubero and Beni districts going to the Grand Nord and Walikale, Masisi and Rutshuru districts comprising the Grand Sud. He said that in his view, the current districts should define the borders of the new province. When asked whether he envisioned Kalehe district in South Kivu, where many Banyarwanda live, being incorporated into the Grand Sud, Serufuli said it should not/not be. Although many Rwandophones inhabit the area, moving to take the area from South Kivu would be politically unwise. He did not want to "compete" with the ethnic Shi prominent in the area but wanted their political support for decoupage.

On Nkunda  
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17. (C) Serufuli said Nkunda,s fall did not come as a surprise to him. One could see it coming because Nkunda could not make peace; he could not compromise and he alienated Kabila and Kagame. Serufuli said he had never known Nkunda until after the inauguration of the transitional government in 2003. Nkunda had grown up in a village while Serufuli had grown up in Goma and during Serufuli,s first years as governor, Nkunda had been stationed in Kisangani as a RCD-Goma military commander. But after Nkunda refused to integrate himself into the FARDC via "brassage" he quickly made himself known. At first he was just a nuisance who used to go in and out of Rwanda, but Serufuli said the May-June 2004 attack on Bukavu established him as a real threat. Serufuli objected strongly when TDY poloff indicated that some people thought he had supported that attack because reports indicated that weapons from Serufuli,s private militia, an "NGO" known as Tous pour la Paix et Developpment (TPD), were used in the attack. Serufuli said that indeed TPD vehicles had been used in the attack, but that was because Nkunda supporters had "stolen" them from TPD.

18. (C) Serufuli went on to say that Nkunda had continued to cause trouble for him as governor. After Bukavu, Nkunda went on to attack Rutshuru and tried to foment dissension in the 5th Integrated Brigade. His attacks in Masisi displaced

thousands of people. Serufuli said that his problem with the CNDP, which Nkunda established in 2006, is that it did not accept that the war was over and refused to play by new rules.

"Kabila became my chief"

19. (C) By contrast, Serufuli said he embraced the peace process. He had long had good relations with Kigali and Kinshasa and does to this day. When asked how he was appointed governor of North Kivu in 2000 after the death of his predecessor, he said that the RCD-Goma committee of founding members formally named him, but that in reality, he was Rwandan President Kagame's choice. As governor, he said he was more interested in governing the province and maintaining stability in the midst of the war than in playing politics with the RCD-Goma. He said that from 2003 onward he had strongly supported the new transition government. "Kabila became my new chief. And I sought to maintain friendly ties with Rwanda, which was my neighbor."

The Situation Today: "Everyone is weak"

10. (C) Serufuli supports the rapprochement between Rwanda and the DRC, indicating that good relations between Rwanda, Congo and Uganda are a prerequisite for peace; any conflict among them is bound to destabilize eastern DRC. Of course, he also supports recent moves by Kabila and Kagame to promote Rwandophones in North Kivu. When asked who he considered to be the most prominent Rwandophone leaders today in North Kivu, Serufuli refused to be drawn out. He answered by saying that not all Hutus and Tutsis supported the idea of bringing Hutus and Tutsis together under a Rwandophone identity (reftels), but that these "extremists" constitute only a small minority in both groups.

11. (C) When asked if PARECO-Hutu leader Pie Mugabo or anyone from PARECO might be emerging as a leader of the Rwandophones, Serufuli dodged the question, saying that he agreed with PARECO "philosophically" as an opponent of Nkunda and the CNDP. But, he continued, he opposed the idea of militias and armed groups acting independently of the

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government. Armed groups and militias like PARECO are too weak and ineffective to defend the people and often act only as bandits. Serufuli therefore has been working to bring them into the government.

12. (C) TDY poloff asked whether ex-CNDP might play a leading role amongst North Kivu Rwandophones, commenting that while numerous ex-CNDP officials had moved into important positions in the military and administration, it was difficult to see which ex-CNDP individuals or groups might emerge as provincial leaders. The Nkunda loyalists including Colonel Sultani Makenga were staying away, the military people associated with Bosco Ntaganda appeared to be integrating into the FARDC, and the "new" CNDP political wing under the titular head of Desire Kamanzi appears to have little money or influence. Serufuli affirmed that this was true and asserted that the CNDP is "disappearing. It is falling apart." The military wing is disappearing into FARDC, the Nkunda loyalists cannot survive if Rwanda is against them and some will integrate into the FARDC, and the politicians have no money and no popularity -- "nobody has heard of them before."

13. (C) When asked why some prominent Tutsi businessmen based in Goma, many of whom had supported Nkunda, apparently refuse to support the Rwandophone project (refs A and B), Serufuli dismissed "businessmen like (Victor) Ngezayo" as "extremists." They did not like the influence of Rwanda in North Kivu because they had grown up doing business under Mobutu and were "not transparent." They are uncomfortable with the new situation because "Rwanda might change things."

¶14. (C) Serufuli acknowledged that, although the CNDP might be weaker, the FARDC itself is "very weak...But the state remains the state." When asked about the challenges of governing North Kivu today as opposed to when he took power in 2000 when he could rely upon the Rwandan Patriotic Army, the RCD-Goma military and the TPD for military support, Serufuli quickly answered that "it is a matter of organizing the population" but he then paused, noting "it is more complicated than before." He started again, saying that "in power, one must have a strategy, make choices and organize the people and institutions." He then said that, although the government and the FARDC are weak, so is everyone else. He emphasized that the FDLR rebels are far less strong than they had been. They have been getting weaker for years and the Rwandan operation in January-February had hurt them further. "Everyone is weak," he repeated.

Kimia 2  
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¶15. (C) When asked about the prospects for Operation Kimia 2, the joint MONUC-FARDC operation against the FDLR, Serufuli began reciting the weaknesses of the FARDC, focusing on the problem of the chain of command, asserting that all major orders had to come from Kinshasa and that FARDC officers in Goma had no authority over local troop movements or actions. "The army and the administration are the problem." Oddly, he then went on to say he was confident that, working with MONUC, the FARDC would succeed in defeating the FDLR decisively. When TDY poloff indicated that he did not understand, Serufuli said that MONUC and FARDC, working together, are stronger than the FDLR and should be able to defeat them in both North and South Kivu.

Next Steps  
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¶16. (C) Serufuli said he expected that the near future would remain difficult and that Mai Mai, FDLR and banditry would continue to plague the region. Getting a grip on the problem will require "will and determination." He was more confident about the medium term because of the improved ties between Rwanda, Congo and Uganda, which he expected to continue. While acknowledging that Uganda and the Nande have historically enjoyed close ties, he did not expect Uganda to take any moves to support Nande that would destabilize the DRC.

¶17. (C) When asked about his own prospects for again becoming governor of North Kivu, Serufuli said he did not know. He had received "no signals" from either Kagame or Kabila and no one had contacted him. Kabila, especially, was very difficult to read. Nor did he expect Governor Paluku to be removed by the North Kivu provincial assembly because his

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allies have a majority in the assembly, at least until the next elections.

¶18. (C) Rather, Serufuli thought it likely that "decoupage" would precede any move to change governors. Article Four of the DRC's Constitution, he said, provides for the creation of new provinces. Though the constitution does not envisage dividing North Kivu, this could be carried through with a vote of the National Assembly, which Serufuli thought could be easily arranged. "On this matter, power lies in Kinshasa," he said, not in the North Kivu government. Decoupage would, of course, mean that new governments would have to be installed in the two new provinces.

¶19. (C) When asked about the return of refugees from Rwanda, Serufuli reminded TDY poloff that many (Hutu) refugees would also be returning from Uganda. He said that the refugees, as well as internally displaced persons, would return to their home areas as soon as security and reconciliation is

restored, which he thought would be facilitated by decoupage.

He acknowledged that the refugees in Rwanda, who generally support Nkunda, might be a problem, noting that Nkunda had "intoxicated" them. This should be manageable, however. As long as Kigali and Kinshasa continue to cooperate on North Kivu, he thought the major security issues could be managed.

#### Praise for U.S. Role...and Concern

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¶20. (C) As the conversation was winding down, Serufuli expressed his appreciation for USG policy in the Great Lakes region, saying that U.S. pressure had helped to bring together Kinshasa and Kigali. He then said he was nervous that the United States under the new administration would not remain as engaged as it had been in promoting detente between Rwanda and DRC. TDY poloff assured him that the U.S. would remain engaged in Great Lakes issues and would promote peaceful relations between Congo and Rwanda, although some individuals and policy details might change.

¶21. (C) Comment: Serufuli's arguments in favor of Rwandophonie and decoupage are well known, but some of the details are interesting. Perhaps significantly, Serufuli appeared to be as upset with the Nande because of their exclusion of Rwandophones from the Grand Nord as from anything Paluku has done. Given speculation in some quarters that the Rwandophone project might involve the creation of a "Grand Sud" that would include the area around Kanyabayonga and/or the Kalehe district of South Kivu, Serufuli's disavowal of any interest in such land-grabbing is notable. Serufuli underscored at several points that the big decisions on North Kivu are made in Kinshasa and Kigali. He was clearly comfortable with this, because as much as any Congolese politician (or Rwandan for that matter) he has demonstrated his ability to get along well with both Kabila and Kagame.

¶22. (C) Comment continued: Serufuli appeared confident that the vast majority of Hutus and Tutsis in North Kivu would embrace their Rwandophone identity over their Hutu or Tutsi identities. He might be right, but we should also be aware that the Rwandophone idea has long been a central tenet of his expressed political philosophy.

¶23. (C) Comment continued: Serufuli's dislike for Nkunda came out strongly. During a subsequent meeting, a well-connected American resident in the DRC told us that in December 2007 Nkunda had pillaged Serufuli's farm in North Kivu, stealing his prized cattle and burning down all structures. Apart from his criticisms of Nkunda, Serufuli was discreet in discussing other Rwandophone figures in North Kivu who might be possible rivals. Notably, he spoke of the weakness of institutions in North Kivu, not of individual Rwandophones. Serufuli's comment that there probably would be no move to remove Governor Paluku before decoupage runs contrary to speculation in North Kivu that Paluku will soon be replaced; however it also might be an acknowledgment that fulfilling the Rwandophone agenda will not be entirely easy going. End comment.

HAYKIN